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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

23 May 1963

SUBJECT: CHINESE COMMUNIST CAPABILITIES FOR ATTACKING INDIA  
THROUGH BURMESE TERRITORY

THE PROBLEM

To assess the maximum offensive capabilities of Communist China's military forces against India in an attack through Burma. No estimate is made of Chinese intentions.

ASSUMPTIONS

1. The government of Burma would not resist the movement of Chinese forces across Burmese territory and would acquiesce in the utilization by the Chinese of Burmese transportation facilities and airfields along the routes of advance.
2. The Burmese would not actively support the Chinese.
3. The Chinese would not divert any forces for security in Burma.

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GROUP 1

Excluded from automatic  
downgrading and  
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4. The Chinese would not augment ground and air forces along China's borders with countries in southeast Asia.

5. The Chinese would use port and rail facilities in North Vietnam.

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## DISCUSSION

### I. GROUND OPERATIONS

#### Logistics

1. The theater of operations for a Chinese Communist offensive against India through Burma encompasses Yunnan Province in China, northern Burma, and the states of Assam, Nagaland, and Manipur in northeast India. The Chinese would probably locate their base depot at Kunming which is served by road from the railroad at Anshun and by rail via Hanoi and Haiphong in North Vietnam.

2. Supplies for Chinese ground forces engaged in operations in India would have to be moved over distances ranging from 800 to 1,700 miles from Kunming. The initial transportation leg would cover the route by rail between Kunming and Ipinglang, and then by road to Hsinchieh, which is near the Sino-Burmese border some 330 miles west of Kunming. From Hsinchieh the Chinese could move supplies across Burma to the Indo-Burmese border via the following main supply routes: (a) over the Ledo Road via Myitkyina, and (b) over the Burma Road to Mandalay and thence by way of the

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Mandalay-Imphal road. Some supplies could also be delivered to Mandalay via the route to Talo and Keng Tung. Available intelligence indicates that extensive repairs to the Shingbuiyang-Pangsan Pass section of the Tado Road and some engineering work on the northern portion of the Mandalay-Imphal road would be required before these logistic routes could support the scale of military operations envisaged in paragraphs \_\_\_\_.

3. The limiting factor governing Chinese attacks on India from Burma would be the amount of supplies which could be moved forward from Kunming through Burma. We estimate that the Chinese could move a maximum of about 1,100 tons into the area. This tonnage, we believe, would be used as follows: 60 tons for engineer units, 340 tons for motor transport, 500 tons for supporting combat operations in India, and 200 tons for air units in Burma.

#### Composition of the Attacking Forces

4. We estimate that the composition of the Chinese Communist force could include an army headquarters to provide operational control along the axes of advance, lightly equipped infantry divisions for the initial phase across the mountainous jungle terrain along the Indo-Burmese border, and an operational reserve consisting

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of standard infantry divisions with their organic medium artillery and tanks, to be employed on the Assam plain.

5. These ground units could be provided from the two armies located in the Kunming Military Region, or, if necessary, could be deployed from China's strategic ground reserve. In any case, sufficient numbers of trained and equipped infantry divisions are readily available from China's standing army.

#### Operational Considerations

6. These troops probably would be staged in Chinese territory near the Sino-Burmese border. Forward movement from the staging areas would have to await necessary road repairs. We believe improvement of the Ledo Road would require the employment of six engineer regiments and take up to several months to complete. Two engineer regiments would probably be sufficient to make the necessary improvements to and maintain the Mandalay-Imphal Road. It is estimated that the attack forces could close in their final assembly areas in from three to four weeks.

7. An offensive during the southwest monsoon (May-September) would be extremely difficult, but not impossible, to support logistically. The most favorable period for military operations in the

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area occurs at the beginning of the dry season in November. Refer to Annex D for a detailed discussion of the climatic effects on ground and air operations.

#### Avenues of Attack

8. We estimate that the Chinese would utilize two major avenues of advance into northeast India. One leads from Pangsau Pass northward through Ledo and across the Digboi oil fields to Dibrugarh; the other westward via Imphal and Kohima, and Gauhati.

9. In simultaneous advances over the two selected avenues of attack into India, the Chinese could employ and logistically support a force estimated at 68,000 troops, organized into approximately five infantry divisions under the command of an army headquarters.\* Tables of personnel and equipment for the army headquarters and for the standard infantry division are shown in Annexes B and C, respectively.

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\* The daily through-put capacities of the Ledo Road and the Mandalay-Imphal route required to support this force are 230 tons and 270 tons, respectively. If the Chinese had as much as six months to restore these logistic routes to their near estimated maximum capacities (600 tons for the Ledo Road and 450 tons for the Mandalay-Imphal Road), additional tonnages delivered over the Kunming Talo-Mandalay Road could permit them to employ up to two additional light infantry divisions.

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10. Along the northern axis leading to Dibrugarh the Chinese force could consist of one light infantry division and one standard infantry division (30,500 troops). Chinese objectives in this attack, we believe, would be the destruction of Indian Army forces, the seizure of the Digboi oil fields, and the eventual link-up with Chinese operations from Tibet into the eastern part of the Northeast Frontier Agency (NEFA).\*

11. In the advance towards Western Assam the Chinese could employ two light infantry divisions and one standard infantry division. In this attack Chinese objectives would be the destruction of Indian forces and, in conjunction with the Chinese attack from Tibet, the occupation of the NEFA and the important areas of north-east India.

## II. AIR OPERATIONS

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12. In the [REDACTED] Estimate of the Communist Chinese Air Threat Against India, dated 17 January 1963, 290 tactical aircraft

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\* USIB Memorandum, "Chinese Communist Ground Threat Against India from Tibet and Sinkiang," dated 17 April 1963.

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were estimated as constituting the air threat. Of this number 100 were apportioned to Sinkiang airbases for operations against the Ladakh-Jammu-Kashmir area and 190 to operations against the NEFA and upper Brahmaputra River valley areas of India. For purposes of this study we believe an additional 205 tactical aircraft could be employed against northeastern India. Therefore, the total number of aircraft which could operate against India's eastern front would be 395 divided as follows: 300 MIG-15/17s, 75 IL-28s, and 20 TU-2s. Included within the 300 jet fighters are 40 MIG-17D limited all-weather aircraft.

25X1X7 13. There are 19 airfields within China and 12 within northern Burma which could be used for the employment of Chinese Communist air forces (see Annexes E and F). Because of locational factors and logistic restrictions, however, only six of the former and two of the latter have been considered for tactical use by the Chinese. Of the six Chinese fields, four were previously referred to in the Estimate of the Communist Chinese Air Threat Against India, dated 17 January 1963. These are Lhasa, Nagchhu Dzong, Yushu and Kunming. Two have been added for purposes of this study -- Mengtzu West and Chengtu/Wenchiang. The Burmese airfields to be utilized are Myitkyina South and Namponmao. We believe the logistic

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support described in paragraph 3 is sufficient to support two fighter regiments at Myitkyina South and one fighter regiment at Namponmea. A program of improving existing forward airfields in Burma and the use of airfields that may be captured in India have been considered and could result in continuing forward deployment of fighter/ground attack aircraft to the immediate vicinity of the active battle area.

14. Jets based at Myitkyina South and Namponmao would be the only fighters that could be employed in a ground attack role. From these two bases in Burma, the fighters could provide close support to ground forces generally within an area embracing Imphal, Dibrugarh, and Sadiya in India (see map, Annex ). TU-2 aircraft, in attacks from Nagechu Dzong airfield in Tibet, could also provide support to ground forces as far south as Imphal. IL-28s would have the range to conduct bombing attacks and reconnaissance over north-east India and jet fighters on combat air patrol could cover all of India east of East Pakistan and Nepal.

15. It is estimated that the Chinese Communist Air Force can maintain an aircraft-in-commission rate of approximately 60 percent with daily sorties numbering 360. A likely mixture for this number of sorties would be 65 ground support and 225 air

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air defense/combat air patrol sorties by jet fighters with the jet light bombers conducting 55 sorties per day and the piston light bombers conducting 15 sorties per day.

16. We believe that approximately 120 light and small transport aircraft could be utilized in supporting operations through Burma. The 30 IL-12s, 16 IL-14s, and 28 C-46s of the Thirteenth Air Division could deliver supplies to the airfields at Myitkyina South and Namponmao from the Chengtu area as long as airborne operations were not conducted elsewhere. In addition, 7 LI-2s and 3 C-47s of the Thirteenth Air Division could operate from Kunming or Mandalay and 35 AN-2s could be located in Burma as follows: 10 at Sinkaling Hkani South, 10 at Kolemia, and 15 at Katha.

17. The aircraft based in the Chengtu area would be capable of delivering about 132 tons of material daily to the Myitkyina South and Namponmao airfields. They probably would be used to develop and maintain initial stocks of POL and ammunition. The AN-2s would have the primary mission of supporting the ground forces. It is believed that these aircraft could maintain an availability rate of about 65 to 70 percent and a sortie rate of two per day. Each aircraft could carry about one ton of cargo for all air dropping or 10 paratroops.

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